

ABSTRACT

Access means are provided for accessing a fixed offshore structure such as a wind turbine (70), larger vessel or the like from a smaller transfer vessel (50), or for providing for transfer between vessels. One or more guide wires (12) are connected from the vessel (50) to the fixed structure (70) or second vessel and placed in tension such as by directing the transfer vessel away from the fixed structure. In one embodiment, inflatable members are suspendable from the guide wires and inflation of the inflatable members causes them to extend along the guide wires to form an access surface (56) across which personnel may walk to access the fixed structure or second vessel from the first vessel. Mounting means are also provided which accommodate relative rotational, translational and pitching movement of the apparatus and vessel, caused by wave motion. In another embodiment, a bridge member is retained on a runway of the first vessel and deployed using said guide wires (12).